

# *Donegal Middle School*

## *Cross Country 2010*

### Parent's Packet

Welcome! We are glad your son/ daughter has shown an interest in cross country and hope you and they decide to join our team. Cross Country is a great sport. By participating in cross country your child will become a better person and a better athlete. They will work hard, but they will also have a lot of fun and gain confidence in themselves. We hope that you, and your son/ daughter decide to be a part of our great tradition!

Below you will find some information we have gathered through the years that is generally helpful to most parents in answering the questions they have about the sport of cross country and the upcoming season.

Thank you,

Coaches: Philip Koser, Duane Koser, and Kim Griest

1. **Team Website:** Visit our team website for information. [www.rundonegal.com](http://www.rundonegal.com) - You will find: practice calendars, meet schedules, directions, course maps, results, and other important information.
2. **What is Cross Country?** Cross Country is a team running sport that takes place in the fall on measured courses over varied surfaces and terrain. Runners usually run on school grounds, but can also run races in local parks or golf courses. High School runners (Varsity and Junior Varsity) run a race measuring 5K or 3.1 miles, while junior high runners run a 2 mile course.
3. **Sign-ups/ Physicals:** Students must receive a physical from their physician and sign a code of conduct for Donegal School District athletics to participate. Physical packets can be picked up in DHS and DMS offices. Once forms are handed into the office, students are placed on the roster.
4. **Practices/ Meets:** The first week of practice for JH is before school starts on August 23 at 3:30. Once school starts, practice is after school at 3:30. We usually practice from 3:30 until 5:30pm at the latest. Mondays are short, but important days to get ready for the meets on Tuesdays. There are 6 meets on Tuesdays, but we will go to 2 bigger Saturday meets that are in the morning. Tuesday meets are at 4:15 for junior high athletes. Practice attendance will be taken, if athletes can not be at practice they are expected to contact the coach. They are allowed 2 unexcused absences.
5. **Costs/ Fees:** There is no cost to sign up for the team since it is a school sponsored sport. The only investment you will need to make is in a good pair of running shoes. Athletes can wear shorts and T-shirts to practice.

6. **Equipment issued:** Uniform (Shirt & Shorts) and Warm-up top and bottom (to be worn at meets only). There is no cost for these materials. They will be collected at the end of the season.
7. **Fundraisers and other costs:** There is usually one team fundraiser. We usually do a sub sale to cover the cost of some equipment needed and for awards given out at the end of the season banquet/ party. We also try to have team shirts or sweat shirts made for athletes and parents to show their team pride.
8. **Summer Running:** Over the summer we will meet on Monday and Tuesday evenings starting on June 14 for some optional group runs. We will run, but also learn some drills and stretches. Meet at the HS at 7:00 pm
9. **Benefits to Cross Country:** Some benefits include, great friendships, healthy exercise- nothing beats being healthy and fit! Fun- you are part of a team and do a lot of fun activities, being apart of a middle school team, the rewarding satisfaction in working hard and pride in doing a great job! CC helps you stay disciplined, get good grades, and develops confidence and a positive attitude!
10. **What you can do as a Parent:** Here are some things you can do to support your team:
  - *Attend* the meets and *Encourage* your child and the team but also acknowledge the efforts made by opposing teams. Negative comments can quickly damage our team's progress. Remember that running is 90% mental and 10% physical.
  - *Insist* that your son/daughter eats and sleeps well.
  - *Ask* a question, rather than telling what you thought of the meet.
  - *Realize* that the courses are all different, so comparing times may be difficult.
  - *Appreciate* how much effort your son/daughter puts into the race, win or lose.
  - *Learn* about running and the sport of cross country.
11. **Hints for Training:** (advice for runners)
  1. You need to buy a good pair of running shoes. Only wear them when you are running. Do not wear them for cruising – this causes the support and cushioning to break down faster. It is helpful to buy running shoes from a store where the employees are also runners, so they are able to help fit shoes to the running style of each individual. A good recommendation is The Inside Track at the Lancaster Shopping Center. Read about different styles of running shoes before you visit the store. Even though everyone wants to look stylish while running, this should be the least important factor when deciding on a shoe. If you have problems with your arches, your knees, or pronation, etc., then you should inquire into shoes that compensate for your specific problem. Contact your coaches for any advice on running shoes.
  2. Stretch!! – 90% of the injuries caused from Cross Country are preventable with proper stretching. You should get in the habit of stretching after each run. Begin stretching prior to aches and pains to avoid bigger problems.
  3. Don't overdo it when getting started. Start out only running 3 days a week. Run at comfortable distances for a while before gradually increasing your mileage. Do not increase your speed until you can run three miles. Try to run at an even pace. Try to

make running a regular part of your week like brushing your teeth, even though you don't feel like it, do it. If possible try to run with a friend, it is much easier mentally.

4. Let coaches know if you feel any soreness. If untreated, this small pain might become a larger pain!
5. Be active over the summer! Bike and swim as much as possible in addition to running. Push-ups and sit-ups are helpful in increasing upper body strength and, therefore, will improve your running form and endurance (i.e. the arms do not get so tired during distance runs.)
6. Proper diet and hydration are essential for good workouts and recovery from workouts. It is important for each runner to eat breakfast and a healthy lunch. Most times, when kids complain about being tired, it is because they have skipped either lunch or breakfast or are not drinking enough water. We also encourage runners to have a clear water bottle to take around to class with them. This way they will be able to stay hydrated during the school day.

## *What to expect*

Below are a few things you may need to be aware of as a runner or a parent of a runner. Running is a very demanding sport physically and mentally on athletes. It is a sport where: what you put into it, you get out of it. In order to be successful it takes hard work, dedication, and commitment to time, time to train the body to adapt, time to rest, sleep and recover, and time to learn. A runner cannot be a part-time athlete. They must live the life of an athlete.

- ❑ **Runners will experience general fatigue and tiredness** - A normal consequence of beginning to train is muscle soreness. If runners have not run enough over the summer, this may last for up to 2 weeks. It also results from any addition of a new workout or intensity in running.
- ❑ **Runners need to watch their health** – Runners need a nutritious, well-balanced diet. (Generally 65-70% carbohydrate, 15-20% protein, 15% fats) You shouldn't have to change meals or meal times. Be aware of what your young runner is eating and try to provide healthy choices. On race days runners generally like to stay away from fried, fatty, or sugary foods and carbonated or acidic drinks. Runners also need to stay well hydrated. Water or watered down juices are best. They should try to stay away from drinks with sugar, caffeine, or carbonation. (General rule- drink 1- 1.5 pints for every pound of water loss in addition to the required 4 pints a day) As with any sport there is a risk of injury. Running injuries tend to happen from over-training or under-preparing for the season. Athletes will have general muscle soreness and other aches and pains that may go away. Running on an injury can cause a more serious injury, thus the importance for runners to let their coach know "how they are feeling."
- ❑ **Runners need adequate rest** – Because of the high energy demands athletes will need time to rest and recover from tough workouts. They should try to get between 7 and 8 hours of sleep a night, especially 2 nights before a race.
- ❑ **Runners need good training shoes** – Proper training shoes help avoid injuries associated with running. There are many types of running shoes for different purposes and types of feet. Running apparel stores often have people who know running or are runners that can

help chose the right shoes. To prolong the life of running shoes they should be used primarily for running. Proper running shoes are the most important equipment needed for running. There is nothing else that is required or essential.

- **Runners train to race** – The goal of our training is to race at our best, especially at the end of the season. Race days are extremely chaotic. Expect that you may not get as much attention from your son or daughter or the coach on race day. The coach has much on his/ her mind and may not be able to talk. The athletes also have much on their mind and are focusing on their races. Athletes are expected to warm up and cool down with their team, be briefed by their coach before and after the race, and prepare for the race with their teammates. Parents are sometimes surprised by the seriousness or competitiveness of their son or daughters. Also, expect the possibility of some disappointment that may occur from a race. Athletes may need emotional space after the race, but will need support and encouragement following.

<http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/document/>

[www.runnersworld.com](http://www.runnersworld.com)